

Youth at Charles Darwin Uni

THE Darwin City Council (DCC) Youth Advisory Group (YAG) has been working in collaboration with DCC staff to coordinate the 2007 Australian Sister Cities Association Conference Youth Program. Youth delegates will be accommodated at the Parap Village Apartments with access to their own pool, barbecue area and chill-out space. The youth program will be based at Charles Darwin University where delegates will have access to world class university facilities.

Delegates aged 16 to 23 will learn about the sister cities movement and build skills in communication and leadership.

They will undertake sessions focused on providing practical steps to making a difference in their communities.

Speakers and presenters include director of the United Nations Information Centre Mr Abdullah Saleh Mbamba, and Brennan MP James Burke.

Delegates will learn bush skills and try some 'bush tucker' at the Territory Wildlife Park, and explore Darwin and its history through 'The Great Race'.



Dynamic Darwin set for important corroboree

THE Australian Sister Cities Association national conference at Darwin from Sunday 30 September to Wednesday 3 October has been designed to recognise and support the thousands of people who work to sustain Australia's sister city relationships around the world. Darwin City Council will host the conference at the Darwin Entertainment Centre. Delegates are set for a terrific forum where they will meet people who are part of the worldwide sister cities movement and be able to share knowledge and build positive international relationships.

Darwin prides itself on its relaxed lifestyle, its multicultural population and magnificent sunsets.

It is a young and vital city-on-the-move and is undergoing constant changes.

Darwin is well planned, clean and green, and boasts modern amenities and beautiful parklands.

Although still casual in many ways, it is increasingly sophisticated and is a popular tourist destination for both Australian and overseas travellers.

The City of Darwin is probably the most cosmopolitan in Australia with more than 60 nation-

alities and an estimated 80 ethnic groups represented.

Just over one quarter of the Northern Territory population identify themselves as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The Larrakia people are Darwin's traditional landowners.

As at 30 June 2005 the estimated resident population of Darwin and nearby Palmerston was 94,658.

Further information on the conference is available from sister cities officer, Samantha French, on 08 8930 0695,

s.french@darwin.nt.gov.au or visit the conference website at www.ascadarwin2007.com

Prime Minister is ASCA patron

THE Australian Prime Minister John Howard has accepted an invitation to be the Australian Sister Cities Association's (ASCA) patron. The Prime Minister's office said in a letter to ASCA president Kevin Hill that he was able to accept the invitation.

The letter, however, asked ASCA to understand that because of demands on the prime ministerial position

he could not guarantee to attend specific functions.

Cr Hill said he was extremely happy that Mr Howard had accepted the position.

"This is a really important recognition of the work we do on the national stage."

"His acceptance is recognition that the sister cities movement is still relevant after 50 years of working toward peace," Cr Hill said.



John Howard

President's message

Hi everyone. I sure feel a little nostalgic writing my last message as president of ASCA for the Sister Cities News and at the same time I am filled with excitement and hope for the future with an expanding art business and my memberships of the Honorary Board of Sister Cities International and the Sister Cities Foundation keeping me vitally involved in the Sister City movement. In July I attended my first Honorary Board meeting at the Sister City International conference in Fort Lauderdale Florida and experienced first hand the depth and width of the world wide Sister City movement with all members completely involved in Citizen Diplomacy, many at the grass roots. Around 600 people attended the SCI conference with half the delegates visiting the USA and representing sister cities organisations from around the world. The conference flowed smoothly and part of my

role included helping the international delegates giving me the opportunity to meet and network with a range of country sister city organisations. I met and had great discussions with the president Prince Kwame Kludjeson of the African Global Sister Cities Foun-



Cr Kevin Hill

dation and Argentinian president Cristina Lauiguia as well as officials from Ghana, Mexico, Japan, China and Northern Ireland. The board of the Sister

City Foundation met and we approved funding to build a school in Timbuktu.

This is the first sister city school to be built as part of an innovative plan to fund schools in areas of the greatest need around the world.

The SCI conference voted to hold the 2009 conference in Northern Ireland with the 2008 conference in Kansas City.

I personally invite you to put in a big effort to join us in Darwin. It is our 25th anniversary conference and the program has been designed to suit first time attendees as well as our regular attending delegates.

Also as another first for ASCA, CLAIR will be conducting their Forum at a half-day session held in conjunction with our conference.

We will also be voting for the board as well as the proposal to change our name to Sister Cities Australia as we head towards the next 25 years.

Secretary's message

RECENTLY I was fortunate enough to be part of a delegation to visit China as a result of an invitation to members of the executive by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship With Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) in Beijing.

The CPAFFC provided a very interesting itinerary including Beijing, Inner Mongolia and Shanghai and we were very fortunate to have Yanling Liu from the CPAFFC for the whole time we were in China. Yanling's English and knowledge of the places we visited were very useful contributing to a most enjoyable trip. We commenced with a seminar at the headquarters of the CPAFFC which included representatives from various Foreign Affairs Departments in China allowing them and our

executive the opportunity to discuss various issues from both sides. Each place we visited



Margaret Evans

included an official reception and the opportunity to discuss various issues that related to both our countries. Of course each place wanted to showcase their most significant sights and places like the Great Wall and the Forbidden City in Beijing and Genghis

Kahn's tomb and mausoleum in Erdos in Inner Mongolia and Shanghai's Pearl Tower and deep sea port were absolutely fascinating.

I would like to encourage those who have sister city relationships with China to arrange a visit as this is the best way to see first hand the customs and culture of a very different but unique country.

Why not consider paying for your own airfares as we did and not rely on your council or organisation to outlay this expense.

With such a rewarding experience, it is well worth it.

I would also like to encourage you to attend our annual conference which will be held in Darwin from 30 September to 3 October this year.

Hope to see you there.

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Thanks to sister cities leader

DEVONPORT Sister City Association celebrated Sister Cities Day on Tuesday 10 July 2007 with a catered buffet meal.

Members provided desserts and these rounded out a repast that was greatly enjoyed.

The celebration was held in the council meeting room decorated in a Japanese theme.

Members who had visited our Sister City Minamata or had home stayed many of our visitors provided the Japanese articles.

The evening also gave the Association the opportunity to express appreciation to other members of the community who helped to further the ideas of friendship and the concept of the Sister City Association at both local and international level.

Highlight of the evening was a presentation to association past president Alderman Bill Wilson who guided the association over the past 18 years through the good times and those that were more difficult.

President Alida Beattie thanked Bill and talked about the history of the Association, of the events, frustrations, joys and fun times of forming our Sister City Assoc-

iation and forging the links with our Japanese friends in Minamata.

"We experienced numerous reciprocal visits of our respective communities and especially the young people."

A special plaque prepared by Alderman Maurice Hill expressed the gratitude of the association. However, Bill was not to be out done.

He had organised a surprise for the night by inviting the Crescendo Choir to sing several items that were part of their performances at

the recent Sydney eisteddfod.

Our Japanese members really enjoyed the rendition of a national Japanese folk song.

Several years ago the choir had visited Minamata through the contacts forged by the Sister City Association.

Recently Ai Utsumi visited her homeland and returned with a children's story book illustrated by a disabled child. Ai read to the audience the story of an ostrich and the book was then to be given to the Devonport mayor.



Devonport Sister Cities Association president Alida Beattie leads an acclamation to past president Alderman Bill Wilson.

Hobart visit to Yaizu in Japan

A DELEGATION from Hobart, Tasmania travelled to Yaizu, Japan in June to celebrate the seventh oldest Australian - Japanese sister city relationship.

The delegation included Hobart Lord Mayor Alderman Rob Valentine, the lady mayoress, Aldermen Marti Zucco, Jeff Briscoe and Eric Hayes, the Hobart City director of community development as well as several self-funded community representatives. The visit to Japan, which follows a delegation from Yaizu to Hobart last November, highlighted 30 years of close ties between the people of these two coastal towns. Hobart's relationship with Yaizu, located in the Shizuoka Prefecture, south of Tokyo, was established in 1977, when the tuna fishing fleet from Yaizu, regularly visited Hobart for provisioning.

Alderman Valentine said that while the direct links with the tuna fishing fleet no longer existed, 30 years later the relationship between Yaizu and Hobart was as strong as ever, with cultural, educational and business links flourishing between the two cities.

"Tasmania's major export group to Japan in 2005 - 2006 was meat products, amounting to \$101 million, so it was fitting

that the delegation visited one of a chain of Jusco supermarkets, which specialise in Tasmanian beef," Ald Valentine said.

"Jusco supermarkets, located throughout Japan, are owned by the AEON Group, which has a significant investment in Tasmania through its 100 per cent ownership of a Tasmanian cattle farming enterprise."

Ald Valentine said to mark the delegation's visit, Jusco had organised an in-store promotion of Tasmanian products.

"The promotion included a display of Tourism Tasmania promotional material, on-site cooking and tasting of Tasmanian beef and distribution of 38,000 leaflets promoting the anniversary of the sister city relationship and the store's Tasmanian products."

The delegates also visited Yaizu Minato Junior High School, where University of Tasmania Japanese language students are working as assistant English Language Teachers (ALTs).

Under this program, the University of Tasmania has sent a total of 29 ALTs to Yaizu since 1988.

The students teach English at government junior and senior high schools in Yaizu for up to two years. Ald Valentine said

the delegation's visit coincided with a visit by a group of students from St Mary's College, Hobart - the school's second visit to Yaizu in as many years.

"Our delegation provided small gifts to the students' Japanese host families as a thank you on behalf of the city for their hospitality provided to Hobart stu-

dents," he said.

Other activities during the four-day visit included attendance at a special session of the Assembly of Yaizu City Council and a reception, which coincided with the Annual Meeting of the Yaizu - Hobart Friendship Association.

Ald Valentine said 30 years was

a significant milestone in the life of a sister city relationship.

"The relationship between Hobart and Yaizu has provided an opportunity for our communities to increase cultural understanding and further international communication in the areas of education, culture and business," he said.



Enjoying Tasmanian beef in Yaizu, Japan. From left: Alderman Eric Hayes, store manager of Jusco, Yaizu Mr Katsumi Nakagami, Yaizu mayor Takao Tomoto, Alderman Jeff Briscoe, Jusco employee, Hobart Lord Mayor Rob Valentine, and Alderman Marti Zucco.

New CLAIR director welcomed

THE Japan Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) has a new director at its Sydney office, Kenji Ikeda.

Retiring director Yoshiyasa Hyotani, introduced Mr Ikeda and said he had experienced three immensely enjoyable years in Australia.

He returns to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications in Japan.

"Mr Kenji Ikeda, a colleague of mine, comes to Australia from Nagano Prefecture in Japan.

"Originally from the Ministry of Home Affairs he



CLAIR director
Kenji Ikeda.

has extensive experience in prefectural government.

"During my term here, I have had the privilege of travelling all over Australia and New Zealand and I take back fond memories of this beautiful part of the world, its spectacular landscapes, vibrant cities, and warm people.

"I look forward to drawing upon these wonderful experiences for years to come.

"I feel most indebted to all those who have supported the goals and activities of CLAIR Sydney."

He said it was an honour and a pleasure to work in Australia.

Edogawa youth in Gosford

GOSFORD City Council was pleased to welcome a delegation from our sister city in Edogawa, Japan when the Edogawa Youth Wing delegation arrived in Gosford on Tuesday 24 July 2007.

Gosford mayor Laurie Maher welcomed the group with a civic reception on Wednesday 25 July.

The students enjoyed warm Aussie hospitality from their host families from Narara Valley High School.

The students enjoyed learning about our Aboriginal culture, visiting the 'locals' at the Australian Reptile Park and venturing further afield with a visit to Port Stephens to take in some whale watching and a 4WD safari tour.

They were farewelled on Thursday 2 August, when they left on the bus for a tour of Sydney before their evening flight. Gosford Sister City Association worked with a team from the high school to help plan a wonderful program for our visitors.

Below: Gosford and Edogawa youth get together.





From left: Valda Smith, Philippa Powell, David Powell, Narelle Gazendam, Sandra Goerling, and Cr Linda Rose.

Bunbury has a 15 year friendship with Setagaya, Tokyo, Japan

BUNBURY is celebrating its 15th anniversary of signing a sister city agreement with Setagaya, in Japan.

As part of the ongoing cultural exchange a biennial photographic competition and exchange was held in February 2007. Thirty photographs selected from entries by photographers were displayed in the Bunbury Regional Art Gallery with 32 images from Setagaya. The Bunbury images were later sent to Setagaya to become part of Setagaya's permanent collection.

Bunbury Setagaya Sister Cities Committee members were heavily involved in organisation of the competition and exhibition.

Coffs Harbour

A DELEGATION from Coffs Harbour travelled virtually the length of Japan, from Sasebo, sister city of Coffs Harbour, in the south to Sapporo in Hokkaido in the north.

At Sasebo a welcome dinner was given by Sasebo City Council and the Japan - Australia Society of Sasebo.

Presents were exchanged between Mayor Cr Keith Rhoades and Mayor Norio Tomonaga and an invitation was extended for Sasebo delegates to visit Coffs Harbour next year to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the sister city relationship.

By Patricia Degens

The delegation then went to Hamanako to attend the conference of the National Federation of Japan - Australia Societies.

Cr Keith Rhoades, invited delegates to attend the conference of the National Federation of Australia - Japan Societies to be held in Coffs Harbour in July next year.

The delegation really enjoyed staying in Towada National Park and Niseko, a ski resort in Hokkaido.

Pakistan Australia smart link

PROGRAM director of the Australia - Pakistan SMART program Shahid Hameed Khan, said the program started work in March 2005.

This was in response to a visit by the chairman of the National Youth Organisation of Pakistan (NYOP) to Australia in February 2005.

The SMART program provides a range of services and activities designed to promote a greater awareness of Australia in Pakistan and a greater awareness of Pakistan in Australia through its social and cultural support programs between two countries such as education, health, youth, training, women training, HIV, AIDS, drugs control, tourism and hospitality, information technology, cultural programs, Urdu newspaper, student and skilled immigration.

Also, allied matters of beneficial interest of international importance to both countries to achieving their business and community development goals.

The SMART Program is a vision to drive knowledge, creativity,

innovation and economic growth to improve prosperity and quality of life.

Lahore is Pakistan's second largest city with eight million people.

Lahore is also the leading software exporting city in Pakistan, as it is the home for many entrepreneurs and leading IT companies.

The city is also dotted with foundries, textile mills and chemical plants, the reason why it is also called the economic driver of Punjab.

The introduction of SMART Program to the Australia Pakistan market would be a positive outcome for both countries.

The SMART Program will most certainly grow Queensland's domestic tourism market.

The program will also provide strong future opportunities for increasing recreational and cultural activities, education, business and skilled migration access to Queensland and other parts of Australia.

Pakistan has an estimated population of 160 million with 90 million young people between the ages of

15 and 30, which is also considered one of the most youth populated countries in the world.

The SMART program's first priority is to contact government and non-governmental organisations from both countries seeking access to human and social development of both countries.

The main aim and objectives are to foster relationship between Australia and Pakistan through social development and ex-changed delegations, exhibitions and joint ventures. To develop a better cultural and social environment between Australia and Pakistan and to ensure joint and mutual investments in both countries.

The SMART program will liaise with officials, authorities and development organisations in Australia and Pakistan to achieve their business and community development goals.

Mr Shahid Hameed Khan, can be contacted at 229 Alfalah Building, The Mall Road, Lahore, Pakistan.

Come on to Gosford



THE delegation from Gosford City Council (GCC) is looking forward to attending the 2007 Australian Sister Cities Association (ASCA) National Conference in Darwin.

The delegation from Gosford is looking forward to the exciting program that Darwin has on offer.

In addition we welcome the opportunity to extend a personal invitation, to many readers of the Sister Cities News who may be in attendance at Darwin, to attend the 2008 ASCA Conference being held at Mantra Ettalong Beach, Gosford New South Wales.

The conference will take place from Sunday 27 July 2008 to Wednesday 30 July 2008 and be based around the conference theme.

Further information is available from Tina Davies, Gosford City Council, PO Box 21, Gosford, 2250. Phone 02 4325 8958, fax 02 4323 3284 - tina.davies@gosford.nsw.

Boseong presentation and Pan Sori singing

DAY three of the 2007 ASCA Conference, Tuesday 2 October, will feature a presentation by the Korea Local Authorities For International Relations. Speakers will include Director General of Korea Local Government Centre, Mr Ihnhwan Chung, and Boseong County mayor Jonghae Jeong. Delegates will also be treated to a performance of Boseong's famous Pan Sori Traditional Singing.



Coffs Harbour delegation with Japanese hosts, From left: Mayor Keith Rhoades, Mayor Norio Tomonaga, Margaret Beckett, Hildegard Zabrack, Patricia Degens, Yvonne Webster, Moira Nolan, Vladimir Stojanovic, Mrs Tomonaga, and Coffs Harbour general manager Stephen Sawtell.

China extends a hand of friendship



Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and Australian Sister Cities Association (ASCA) executive members during a top level meeting in Beijing. From left: Mr Qing Boming from CPAFFC, Ms Qing Wei from Shandong, Mr Wang Yousheng from Shaanxi, Mr Li Wenliang from Beijing, Mr Song Jinchang from Tianjin, Mr Ji Ningfeng from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Guo Junfeng from Henan, Mr Yao Mingyu from CPAFFC, Mr Graham Fletcher from the Australian Embassy, Mr Chen Haosu, president of CPAFFC, Cr Kevin Hill from ASCA, Mr Xie Yuan from CPAFFC, Ms Jan Teasdale, Ms Margaret Evans, Cr Ray Kelly, and Mr Caisley Graham from ASCA.

CHINA is keen to establish sister city relationships with Australian cities.

Discussions between the Australian Sister Cities Association (ASCA) executive and the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) in Beijing on Tuesday 22 May 2007 left little doubt that a basis for firm friendships between the two countries is well established.

However, there is an enormous imbalance in the size and number of cities in our countries.

ASCA president Kevin Hill told a seminar with representatives from across China and the ASCA executive that this presented a problem for Australia. Cr Hill said this was both in the small numbers of cities available in Australia to match with the Chinese cities

and resources available to Australian Sister Cities organisations.

He told the meeting that Australia did not have the large cities that China had, but Australia was keen to form new relationships where possible.

He said one strong factor in building relationships was that both countries focused on developing youth programs.

"We also need to establish a memorandum of understanding between CPAFFC and ASCA.

"We need to establish a pathway so that both sides know where the relationships are heading.

"ASCA also asks for a five year plan within the formalisation of agreements," he said.

People to people strength

THE Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) has placed a formidable challenge before the Australian Sister Cities Association (ASCA) with requests for Australian sister city relationships linked to large cities in China. Discussion between ASCA executive members and the CPAFFC agreed that people to people movements had never been stronger and that Beijing was ready to develop friendships all over the world. The sister cities movement is a vital part of this.

Chinese delegates at the meeting said the Chinese Government sanctioned and supported sister city relationships with Australia. The meeting, held in the CPAFFC Beijing offices on Tuesday 22 May 2007, set a pathway for people wanting to establish further sister city

agreements.

Delegates agreed that a new trend in cooperation existed and that more countries were embracing exchanges between young people.

One problem that emerged, however, was that Australia did not have the large cities to match China's cities. Speakers noted that Chinese local government was strong and could handle almost any issues.

It was agreed that requests for sister city relationships should be channelled through ASCA and through the CPAFFC.

It was also noted that community activities played an important role in raising awareness of the people to people movement.

And that sister cities was not the only movement seeking people to people friendships and that the sister cities movement should embrace others doing similar work.

Australian art for China



Australian Sister Cities Association president Kevin Hill presents an Australian painting of Sydney Harbour to president of CPAFFC Mr Chen Haosu.

Talks in China create firm contact

FIRM dialogue was established between the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the Australian Sister Cities Association (ASCA) during the ASCA delegation to China during May 2007.

Both groups have a mission to promote friendship and mutual understanding between people throughout the world.

The Association has branches in all provinces and autonomous regions in China. CPAFFC makes contacts and promotes exchanges with friendly organisations and people all over the globe and invited the ASCA delegation to spend 10 days in China.

ASCA secretary Margaret Evans said the May meeting was extremely valuable because ASCA was now able to refer requests from groups seeking relationships with China to the CPAFFC.

"I have established a cordial relationship with CPAFFC members and this makes the process much easier for both sides.

"It is important for us to have face to face meetings with people from other cultures," she said.

Exciting trip across China



The Great Wall of China is a great experience

THE Australian Sister Cities Association delegation was taken by bus from Beijing for the 50 kilometre journey to the Badaling section of The Great Wall of China.

The wall is a Chinese treasure and a must see part of China.

It provides a wonderful day out, but is hard going along some of the steep areas.

The ancient steps have high risers and are built up mountainous slopes.

The area is busy with tourists and vending stalls that sell a myriad of Chinese artifacts and tourist keepsakes, and the Badaling Hotel Coffee Shop provides a spot to relax over a cuppa.

Badaling is the most visited section of the great wall.

This section was built in the 16th century during the Ming Dynasty and was restored during 1957 to be the first section opened to tourists.

Millions of people go there each year in what has become a major tourist attraction.

Enjoying one of the great wonders of the world, The Great Wall of China. From left: ASCA president Cr Kevin Hill, CPAFFC officer Yan Ling Liu, ASCA committee member Cr Ray Kelly, vice president Jan Teasdale, treasurer Caisley Graham, secretary Margaret Evans, and Zi Ye - Karen to the Aussies.

Yangshan free trade port

CHINA has built a massive deep sea port around the tiny Yangshan Island 30 kilometres from the mainland.

The port is connected to one of Shanghai's satellite cities, Luchaogang by a 32.5 kilometre sea bridge.

Luchaogang is a custom built town finished in 2001, designed to serve Shanghai's international shipping and directly linked to the harbour by the sea bridge.

Work on the port started in June 2002 and it began operating in December 2005.

It has five berths along a 1.6 kilometre

front for 70,000 to 100,000 tonne container ships.

Work on the second stage began in December 2006 for an extra four large container ship berths and more stacking area.

The connecting sea bridge is the longest in the world and is built mainly of cement beams with 60 to 70 metre spans and a suspension bridge for passage of large ships.

It is 31.5 metres wide with eight lanes and two emergency lanes.

The bridge has an 80 kilometre speed limit.

By 2010 building work on the port is expected to be finished and the 10

kilometre deep water coastline along Yangshan Harbour will have more than 30 berths.

Shanghai Municipality and Zhejiang province are responsible for building and running the port system that they say will provide the region with a promising economic future.

The plan is to complement economic development in the Yangtze River Delta and Yangtze River Drainage area and to generate a strong driving force for the surrounding regions.

The new port is expected to assure that Shanghai will be fully competitive as an international shipping centre.

China looks back and ahead

By Jim Mynard

FRIENDSHIP to visitors and a booming economy were two significant aspects obvious to members of the Australian Sister Cities Association (ASCA) delegation to China during May 2007.

The Chinese People's Association

for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) hosted the delegation for 10 days and showcased China through China's capital, Beijing, capital of Inner Mongolia, Hohhot, and Shanghai.

Delegation members were taken to ancient sites, steeped in Chinese culture and history, including the Forbidden City, in the heart of Beijing, the Great Wall of China, museums, the famous Wu Gardens, the massive Genghis Khan Mausoleum, and the Hohhot Five Pagoda.

They also stepped into the present and future to see the new China, well focused on the 2008 Olympic Games, the almost totally automated Yili Milk Factory, a massive steel mill at Baotou in central inner Mongolia, and the 468 metre high Shanghai Oriental Pearl tower.

Members were also taken to the Yangshan Free Trade Port, built 32.5 kilometres off shore, and to the Urban Planning Administrative Bureau of Shanghai.

Much to see

CHINA has much to see and has established a lucrative tourist industry to showcase its treasures and its way of life throughout the centuries.

Tourists could spend hours exploring places such as 'The Forbidden City' in Beijing, museums across the country, or the Pearl Tower in Shanghai.

The Forbidden City, also known as Palace Museum provides an insight into life for China's leaders 500 and 600 years ago.

Work started on the palace, which is in the centre of Beijing, during 1406 and it became home for 24 Chinese emperors for the next 500 years.

It takes up 720,000 square metres and is surrounded by a wall 3428 metres long and 10 metres high.

The museum is considered to be the most magnificent architectural complex in China and the biggest and most intact palace complex in the world.

Residents meet in the palace areas to play music, sing, and enjoy games.



Inner Mongolia captivates the team



The green city

HOHHOT, the capital of Inner Mongolia, is known as 'The Green City'.

The urban area is 149 square kilometres and is the political, economic, technology, educational, and cultural centre of Inner Mongolia.

Hohhot's population is 2.58 million with 1.5 million living in the city area.

The airport feeds 40 domestic routes to major cities and two

international routes to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, and Chita in Russia.

Dairying is its pride and it won the 2005 'Capital of Dairy' award. The economy benefits from mining commodities including graphite, marble, bentonite, kaolin, dolomite, silica, copper, iron, zinc, magnesium, gold, and coal combined with the rich farming and agriculture.

The deer city

THE delegation visited a steel mill at Baotou in western Inner Mongolia and excitement was obvious among delegation members as they crossed the famous 'Yellow River' to get to the beautiful Russian designed city.

Baotou is known as 'The Deer City', so named because the word comes from the Mongolian 'baokertuth', meaning deer's paradise.

The area is rich in natural resources with 74 minerals.

Baotou is an important economic centre and the hub connecting the Republic of Mongolia, Russian north China, and north western China by highways, rail and airlines.

It is a new rising industrial city and the largest industrial city in Inner Mongolia.

It is described as the iron and steel city in grassland because of its wide surrounding farmland areas.

The city has wide expanses of gardens and at night is a cascade of light.

Families wander around the parks in the evenings and make a special effort to say 'hello' to foreigners in what is a pleasant and friendly atmosphere.

Delegates visited the deer park where they were able to hand feed deer.



Genghis Khan a name from history

GENGHIS Khan, like Chairman Mao is revered by the Chinese people.

You see the vast monuments to the great leaders in Tian'anmen Square in Beijing and the extraordinary Genghis Khan Mausoleum in Inner Mongolia. Both are interesting focal points and provide a graphic record of two important phases in China's history.

Genghis Khan was born in the mid 1100s.

His father died early and he came under the influence of his mother who taught him leadership as well as how to care for and protect others.

Yet he appeared to be not

always tender, particularly to his foes.

He is seen by many as a ruthless conqueror, but is a hero in his own country.

He is accredited with bringing the warring tribes together in one mighty nation and to this day there is a certain inherent national pride seen among the Inner Mongolians.

He died in 1227, but his sons and their sons controlled his empire for more than 150 years on.

Descendants of the family still manage the mausoleum and it is reputed that the family genes can be found in five per cent of men in the world.

Top left: Section of the vast Genghis Khan Tomb area that depicts the mobile Mongolian huts (yurts) pulled by oxen. Top right: Yurts in the Inner Mongolian grasslands area built for motel rooms in a developing tourist centre. Centre: A cast iron statue of a Mongolian horseman in the time of Genghis Khan. Bottom left: Genghis Khan's mausoleum. Bottom right: The Five Tower Pagoda at Hohhot.



Above: Foreign Affairs Office of Inner Mongolia, deputy director, Wu Dalai, in national costume, and Australian Sister Cities Association president Cr Kevin Hill.



Beijing to Shanghai

ONE of the highlights of the Australian Sister Cities Association delegation to China was a visit to a Beijing opera at Liyuan Theatre.

This was a colourful and exciting experience.

Beijing China's national opera enjoys immense popularity among the Chinese people and draws a large number of foreigners. It began in 1790 when four opera troupes came to Beijing to perform.

Beijing, for 1000 years, has been China's capital and is a treasure of Chinese culture and history. Considerable focus is being placed on the

2008 Olympic Games to be held from 8 to 28 August and most Chinese people speak of the coming games with a great deal of pride.

China will hold the 13th Paralympics from 6 to 17 September 2008 featuring 20 sports.

Rowing will be included in the Paralympics as an official event for the first time.

A count down clock in Tian'anmen Square keeps people's interest as it clicks back in seconds, now less than a year to go.

Shops have a host of games paraphernalia and plenty of buyers, includ-

ing delegation members who were keen to be among the first with Olympic Games 2008 keepsakes.

Shanghai is a city with nearly as many people as we have in Australia.

Widely regarded as the main centre of China's economy, the city is also one of the nation's most important cultural, commercial, financial, industrial, and communications centres.

The delegation went to the 468 metre Oriental Pearl Tower, the highest television tower in Asia and the third highest in the world.

The tower provides a full circle view of the massive city and across the waterway section of the Pudong economic sector.

Members were also taken to the Shanghai Urban Development History Museum in the lobby of the tower where a history buff could spend days.

The Shanghai Museum, established in 1952, is famous for its collection of ancient Chinese art.



Top right: From left: Shanghai Municipal Foreign Affairs Office (SMFAO), staff person Australian Sister Cities Association (ASCA) treasurer Caisley Graham, Chinese People's Association for Friendship with foreign countries (CPAFFC) Yan Ling Liu, ASCA secretary Margaret Evans, president Cr Kevin Hill, SMFAO deputy director Wu Jinlan, ASCA vice president Jan Teasdale, executive member Cr Ray Kelly, and SMFAO, and staff member. Above right: ASCA secretary Margaret Evans, vice chairman of Shanghai Foreign Affairs Office Ms Wu Jinlan, and ASCA vice president Jan Teasdale. Right: Making wine in one of the ancient gardens. Below right: Residents gather at The Forbidden City, Beijing to socialise in playing games. Left: A major business centre in Shanghai. Below left: Beijing main roads are often decked.



Connolly - Flack games a big winner

THE City of Casey, southeast of Melbourne, will send a 120 strong complement to the second 2008 James Connolly Games in Springfield, Ohio, America.

Event co-organiser Bob Muir said during a Connolly Games information night on Wednesday 1 August that he was a member of the inaugural Connolly Games tour to America in 2004.

"The tour was a wonderful success," he said.

The reciprocal Connolly Games in America and the Edwin Flack Games in Casey is an award winning sporting and cultural event held as part of Casey's Sister City agreement with Springfield. Flack was the first Australian to win an Olympic gold medal and Connolly the first American.

Both won their medals at the 1896 games in Athens and both countries have competed in every Modern Olympic Games.

Event organisers Lisa Speirs, Kay Vrieze, and Mr Muir have foreshadowed a fairly tight ship with a selection process, firm tour payment

guidelines, and a strict code of practice.

"We will have rules, team managers, and coaches to supervise younger people.

"Our team is representing the City of Casey and ultimately behaviour is up to the individual.

"However, anyone who crosses the line and misbehaves will be on the next plane home," he said.

The tour is expected to cost between \$3500 and \$4000 each, but fundraising and sponsorship will be part of the effort.

Mr Muir has led a strictly community based and now experienced games committee since the inaugural Edwin Flack Games.

The organising committee of 12 is representative of participating sports on the tour.

Ms Speirs is a City of Casey community development team leader. She said the sports people on tour would be aged 16 to 18 with a ratio of two adults to seven young people.

Mr Muir said taking 120 people on tour was an enormous task, but young sports people on the trip were assured of a

wonderful experience.

"They will spend time with American families.

"They will visit places such as Disneyland, Universal Studios, Rodeo Drive, and Hollywood.

"Last year we flew on separate planes to Auckland in New Zealand and then on one plane to Los Angeles.

"After a few days relaxing together without training we flew to Springfield.

"Probably the most difficult time for young people is meeting their new families, but they quickly settle in because the Americans do it well.

"Then we get down to the sporting competitions where we can hold our own," he said.

Mr Muir said the committee would retain those things that worked well on the last trip, but after discussions other rules would be introduced.

Ms Vrieze said every effort was made to match people with like interests for home hosting.

"This will be done fairly early and that enables families to establish a dialogue," she said.



Top. Event organisers Lisa Speirs, Kay Vrieze, and Bob Muir, provided information about the 2008 tour to Springfield, Ohio. Above: Casey ambassador Rouget Mizher, and basketballer Carolyn Pauline, with the men's event trophy brought home from the 2004 Connolly Games.

PARKES mayor Robert Wilson, recently visited the council's sister city, Coventry, England. Cr Wilson used the opportunity to be involved in several meetings with civic and government leaders to discuss skills shortages in regional New South Wales (NSW) and possible remedies.

He also extended the hand of international friendship by rekindling relationships with key institutions in Coventry.

King of afternoon radio, Bob Broly, interviewed the mayor and mayoress in a 40 minute session that beamed out to five million listeners.

They discussed topics such as the drought in Australia and the shortage of doctors in rural NSW.

The interview included reminiscences of Bob's visit to Parkes as part of the 2000 sister city delegation.

The mayor was invited to officially open the new Sir Henry Parkes library in the Coventry Charter Primary School.

The Charter Primary School is a new institution which incorpo-

Parkes and Coventry's relationship is built on history and goodwill

rates the former Sir Henry Parkes Primary School and the Alderman Harris Primary School in Coventry.

The library was named to preserve the link with the former school and to acknowledge the sister city relationship between Parkes and Coventry.

Parkes Council's assistance was also sought in recognising the naming through the provision of material on Sir Henry to the school and by the development of an

internet link with schools in Parkes.

Sir Henry Parkes is considered to be the 'father of Australian Federation'.

He was born in Warwickshire, England, but knew considerable financial hardship through much of his life.

He was a devoted politician, but blighted by money problems, made no less easy because public office in those times was voluntary.

He became premier of New South Wales and it was a speech he made at Tenterfield, NSW, in 1889 that probably set the scene for Australia's nationhood. The Commonwealth of Australia began on 1 January 1901, with the first federal parliament meeting on 9 May 1901.



Left: Robert and Vicki with the king of afternoon radio in the west midlands - Coventry and Warwickshire, Bob Broly.

Above: Cr Wilson talking with school children after a presentation of books.

Sister cities in China

Opportunity is available to form sister city relationships with Chinese cities.

CHANGCHUN is the capital of Jilin Province and is one of the prominent cities in Northeast China. It covers 20,604 square kilometres and has 7.13 million people. Economic development of the city is supported by the headquarters of the First Automobile Works Group (FAW). Other industries include food processing, biopharmaceutical and photoelectronic information. Because of resource advantages, the corn processing industry in particular has become the most booming sector. Changchun is also a city with an atmosphere of enriched human culture.

It is in the continental humid monsoon climate zone with an average temperature of 5.2 degrees. The spring and autumn are short, while the winter lasts longer, and summer is fresh and comfortable. NINGBO in Zhejiang Province, China, is a coastal port city, four hours drive from Shanghai on the Central East Coast.

It is a rich agricultural and trading city. Next year there will be a bridge from Shanghai to Ningbo which will reduce the travel to two hours and make Ningbo almost a suburb of Shanghai.

There are 3.4 million people in the city proper and 6 million in the outlying areas.

Ningbo has a long and rich history derived from a pre-historic settlement more than 5000 years old.

The city is an independent municipality and has put great

investment in surrounding areas.

There are many new residential and trade zones along with many free trade zones near the deep water port of Beilun. Ningbo is home to many universities and centres of higher education and hopes to be the centre of excellence for education for Zhejiang.

YUEQING City is in the Zhejiang Province that has 21 towns and 10 villages under its jurisdiction.

Yueqing has a population of 1.18 million and has a land area of 1223 square kilometres. It has industries in electrical appliances, electronics, drilling bit for construction, machines and instruments, precision moulding, and casual apparels.

Yueqing is the leading county in the development of private economy, famous throughout the country. Among its 60 private conglomerates, five are ranked among the 'top 500 Chinese enterprises' and three have joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Industrialists Committee.

Yueqing abounds in harbour resources, with 'Qili Harbour' and 'Yueqing Bay Harbour'. As the key development harbour of the country, 'Qili Harbour' is the important strategic point of Wenzhou developing from coastal city to marine city, which can be built with more than 40/10000-tonne berths.

Yueqing Bay Harbour is a new harbour with a deeper main channel.

Further details from Margaret Evans at mevans@hobsonsby.vic.gov.au



Election profiles

Cr Ray Kelly

I AM nominating for a position on the Australian Sister Cities Association as an Executive Member.

I have been a member of the ASCA Executive for the past 7 years and have worked on many projects including the new constitution, travel policy, membership retention and expansion, and the retention of the Youth Program part of our Annual Conferences. I am committed to members views being presented on the ASCA Executive Committee.

I am working with upper levels of Government to increase their financial assistance for the operating costs of ASCA, and to create partnerships with those international Sister Cities of our members. I am also currently seeking financial assistance/sponsorship for our Conference Youth Program to minimise the costs of the overall conference registration to allow the community members of ASCA to attend and enhance their knowledge of the Sister Cities movement.

I have been a Noosa Shire Councillor for the last 22 years, introducing a number of initiatives including Noosa Junior Council, the Noosa Sister Cities and Friendship Links Association, skateboard parks, and streetscapes for our hinterland towns. I am the Chairperson of the Noosa Council General Committee, past Chair of Planning and Development Committees, and Deputy Chair of the Local Disaster Management Committee.

I will truly represent the views of the membership on the Executive and am committed to continue working hard and to the best of my ability.



Cr John Procopiadis

COUNCILLOR John Procopiadis has been a Randwick City councillor for 13 years.

As a councillor for the West Ward of the city, Cr Procopiadis has been deputy mayor on two occasions and while in this role organised a sister city relationship with the Island of Castellorizo, Greece.

Other positions he has held include four years service as vice president of the Sydney Coastal Councils and chairperson of the Springtime Greek Glendi, a large event to promote Greek culture and raise funds for various organisations in need in Sydney's eastern suburbs, for example the Sydney Children's Hospital.

Cr Procopiadis is currently working on creating student exchange programs with the Island of Lemnos and the Island of Rhodes, Greece, in order to give young Sydney and Greek high school students the opportunity to study overseas and learn about another culture.

The Greek language is the second most spoken language other than English in Randwick City and Cr Procopiadis is passionate about working on behalf of the community to promote multiculturalism in Randwick City.



Cr Wayne Smith

I HAVE a long history of support and participation in 'Sister City' activities having attended a number of 'National' conferences and visited each of Casey's 'Sister' and 'Friendship' Cities since my election to Council in 1993.

I am particularly proud of my involvement in our East Timor relationship - our local community has embraced the cause and thousands of dollars have been raised to rebuild several pre-schools at a cost of nearly \$US20,000 each.

I have initiated council funding for sewing machines, laptops and other equipment and supported the sponsorship of Ermera district officials to come and undertake training in Casey.

In 2004, I accompanied nearly 100 young Casey athletes to our USA 'Sister City' Springfield, Ohio, for the inaugural 'James B Connolly Games' and have supported the two reciprocal visits of 'Springfield' athletes to Casey for the 'Edwin Flack Games'.

I stand in order to continue the good work of the ASCA executive and to further the promotion of the ideals of the Casey, Australian and International 'Sister City' movements.

As a secondary school teacher with more than 26 years' experience, I will also take a special interest in youth issues and youth involvement including our own ASCA youth program.



Cr Christine Tilley

I HAVE been a Darwin City Council alderman since elected in 1987.



Throughout my 20 year term as an alderman I have been involved in and advocated for Sister Cities and I am a firm believer in the value of Sister Cities to communities locally and internationally.

I previously served a two year term on the ASCA Executive during which time I advocated for the regular rotation of the executive to ensure the continuous input of new and fresh ideas. I am now seeking the opportunity to apply my experience and energy to the enhancement of ASCA.

I have a strong background in business and governance and I was instrumental in the 2005 restructuring and development of the Darwin Sister City program.

My hands on experience with Sister Cities includes my role on the organising committee of two ASCA national conferences, the first as Chairman in 1999 and this year's conference in 2007. In addition to serving on the Darwin City Council Sister Cities Management Committee I have also been directly involved with Darwin's Sister City relationships with the Kalymnos (Greece) and Haikou (China).

I believe in the philosophy and practical benefits of the sister cities movement and that I can make a valuable contribution to Sister Cities nationally as well as be an effective representative of regional Australia and the Northern Territory.

Cr Robert Bell

COUNCILLOR Robert Bell has been a member of the Gosford Sister City Association since its inception in 1987 and the chairman for the past nine years.

During this time he has promoted the sister city movement extensively and was part of the council that proposed and established the sister cities of Edogawa, Japan and Nitra, Slovakia in 1988.

As mayor, Robert secured the largest sister city gift, when Edogawa contributed \$738,000 financial support (total cost \$3.5m) to create the Gosford Edogawa Commemorative Garden at Gosford Regional Gallery along the shores of Caroline Bay in 1992.

Robert stated that, "this wonderful contribution from our sister city has forever cemented an invaluable partnership, friendship and mutual respect between two diverse cultures".

This magnificent community venue is enjoyed by more than 80,000 visitors annually.

Robert would bring to the executive some new ideas to expand the ideals of the sister city movement including encouraging more young people to become involved, and add to the strength of the executive by supporting initiatives to enhance effective communication between individuals and organisations involved in the movement.

Robert is part of the team from Gosford which is hosting the ASCA conference in 2008 and is looking forward to welcoming delegates to the conference.



Peter Filmer

G'DAY, my name is Peter Filmer and I am currently employed as the City Events and Protocol Supervisor at Blacktown City Council.

I have been involved with Sister Cities since 1995 and I currently have stewardship over Council's four Sister Cities, one each in, Country NSW (Liverpool Plains), New Zealand, South Korea and China.

Apart from my working life I was a first grade Rugby League Referee and later a Video Referee in the NRL and served as Association Treasurer for



eight years.

I am the current President of Springwood Cricket Club, a former Director of Prospect Credit Union and currently Chairman of the Blacktown Relay for Life Committee.

Yes, I am a busy person, however, I do believe that my wealth of professional experience combined with years of voluntary commitment to the community equip me well to serve on the board of ASCA.

Darwin weather

DARWIN'S weather is perfect from May to September. The days are mild and the nights are balmy and cool. This is the 'Dry Season', when the days are characterised by gentle southeast trade winds and blue skies are the norm.

The weather in September - October is usually warm and sunny, becoming more humid in the build up to the Wet, with temperatures around 25 - 30 degrees celsius.

Graham Watts honoured

POPULAR ASCA member and former ASCA Awards judge Graham Watts has been honoured by his community.

Marion City recently officially named 'The Graham Watts Park' in his honour. Graham no doubt is thrilled along with his many friends in ASCA.

Graham has been associated with conferences and ASCA over many years. He is a great advocate of the Marion sister city program and sister cities in general in South Australia and Australia.

Full story and photo next edition.

China conference gets diplomatic okay

AUSTRALIAN Embassy in China minister, Graham Fletcher commended a conference between the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the Australian Sister Cities Association (ASCA). Mr Fletcher attended the meeting held at the CPAFFC offices in Beijing on Tuesday 22 May.

He said the high level of friend-

ship between the two groups had come from years of hard work.

"We receive approaches at the embassy for sister city relationships and it has been helpful to have these associations in China and Australia working together."

He said relationships were developing well, but should not be forced.

Elected uncontested

Margaret Evans

MY involvement in the Australian Sister Cities Association (ASCA) commenced in 1991 when I attended my first conference in Devonport which led to my interest in becoming more involved and in Adelaide in the Year 2000 I nominated and was successful in obtaining the position of national secretary.

My main objective was to improve ASCA's image and professionalism which I have achieved with the assistance of my fellow colleagues within the executive however more needs to be done in the area of promotion and growing the membership which I can accomplish using the skills and experience I will bring to the position.

Some of the improvements I have helped achieve during the past few years include producing agendas and minutes in a more professional manner, replying to correspondence and website inquiries promptly, keeping a register of all inwards and outwards correspondence, working closer with all levels of government and community groups offering support and advice on new or existing sister city relationships, promoting and encouraging membership of ASCA particularly within the State of Victoria, improving the communication between ASCA and its members by producing a newsletter after each executive meeting and establishing and maintaining a members database.

I look forward to my continued work and association with ASCA.

ONLY one nomination each was received for the position of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Subject to the returning officer's declaration they will be elected.

Caisley Graham

FOLLOWING my election to the position of National Treasurer in 2001 I have introduced a number of changes to the financial processes of the Association including the introduction of a modern Excel book keeping system, the introduction of the accrual method of accounting and compliance with GST legislation. With the support of fellow members of the executive in becoming more mindful and accountable for expenditure the financial position with investment has increased each year, whilst maintaining the membership fee for both Council



Association and Individual membership at affordable levels, there being only one increase during the past six years. On a local level I am a member of the Lake Macquarie Sister City Committee holding the position of Deputy Chairman. I also hold Individual membership of the ASCA Inc. and held the position of secretary treasurer with the then Newcastle Sister City Committee for 17 years. My active involvement with the sister city movement commenced in 1987 and this year 2007 marks 21 years of continuous involvement at both a local and national level. I have attended 20 National Conferences, many at which I have been actively involved in the conduct and presentation of numerous workshops and sessions. I have also attended three World Forums and acted as a judge on the National Awards Judging Panel for four years, currently holding the position of Deputy Chairman of the National Awards Committee. I submit that I have demonstrated having a genuine interest in the future of the ASCA Inc and possess the necessary experience to fulfil the position of Honorary National Treasurer, the position for which I offer myself and seek your support for election to that office.

Jan Teasdale

I WAS first elected to the position of vice president of the Australian Sister Cities Association Inc. in 2001 and now seek your support for re-election to that position for a further term.

In addition to carrying out executive functions a major responsibility of the position of vice president is chairman of the National Awards Committee. This entails total responsibility for all aspects related to the conduct each year of the national awards program.

Since my involvement I have been able to lift its profile by the continued enhancement of the National Awards Handbook and Commemorative Record and with the support of the executive have been able to provide trophies of a more appealing design. On a local level I am the secretariat co-ordinator of the Belmont Sister City Association.

Prior to this appointment I held the position of chairman of the association and my contribution to the sister city movement generally has been recognised with the following awards: Adachi City Japan 1994 - Awarded Honorary Citizenship and Belmont Small Business Awards - Awarded Volunteer of the Year 2005.

I enjoy working with the sister city network including facilitating workshops and sessions to impart knowledge gained over a decade of continuous involvement. As a member of the ASCA Executive I maintain contact with many current and potential sister cities and have visited a number of local authorities in Western Australia explaining the benefits of ASCA and being part of the sister city movement.

I now seek your support to my nomination for election to the position of vice president of the Australian Sister Cities Association Inc.



Ald Bill Wilson

MY first involvement with the sister cities movement was in 1989 when I was elected Chairman of the inaugural Devonport Sister Cities Association at a public meeting called by the Mayor.

My interest was sparked through my two years national service, with 11 months in South Vietnam.

From this I made a commitment to myself that I would endeavour to do a small part in ensuring my children did not have to endure being involved in a war. It is still my belief that we do not go to war against our friends and through international links we may, in our own small way, reduce the risk of this occurring.

I attended my first conference at Shepparton in 1989 and with the exception of Bendigo have attended all since. I was involved in organising Devonport Conferences in 1991 and 2006.

In 2006 I also held the position of chairing the organising committee.

I have served more than 22 years as an elected alderman of the Devonport City Council and visited Japan on two occasions in my own right as well as joining, in my role as an executive member, an official ASCA delegation to China.

In April 2000 I was invited to present at the third Asia Pacific Public Affairs forum International Association Summit in Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

I have been an individual member of ASCA for many years and I am a current executive member.

I am requesting your support for my nomination as the ASCA president.

I also ask your support in ensuring ASCA continues to offer valuable service, advice and assistance in furthering the aims of the Association.



Devonport confirms Minamata friendship

COMMUNITY involvement in the Minamata, Japan, sister city visit to Devonport has been given as one reason for the success of the project.

The delegation arrived in Devonport on Sunday 25 March and returned on Wednesday 28 March.

Minamata mayor Katsuaki Miyamoto said that through homestays the visitors hoped to be immersed in the beautiful scenery as well as the culture and customs of Devonport and its people.

Members of the Minamata delegation were home hosted by people in the Devonport area. Devonport sister city visit coordinator Marcus Lee said families who opened their homes to the visitors said they learnt a lot from the experience and wished that the stay could have been longer.

"Minamata students attended school for a day at high schools in Devonport and Latrobe.

"Several young people from these schools have been corresponding with pen friends in

their sister city for some time so it was a good chance for them to meet a young person from Minamata first hand."

Singers from Nixon Street Primary School performed Japanese and Australian songs to welcome the Minamata group. Besides catering for the farewell get together, students from Devonport High School presented a Japanese dance item and taught the visitors Australian bush dancing.

The Minamata delegation was keen to discover more about Devonport's environmental initiatives, because their city had a strong environmental focus.

They met with Devonport bushland coordinator Phil Murray and the green corps team on site at Don Heads and heard about work to eradicate weeds and create a well functioning wetland. Mr Murray explained strategies employed to manage the threat of bushfire in the municipality.

Mr Lee said the visit by Mayor Miyamoto and his delegation

was the culmination of a year of celebrations that took Devonport and Minamata into their 11th year as sister cities. "During the last 10 years there have been many exchanges in various fields such as sport, education and culture.

"To commemorate a decade as sister cities Devonport mayor Lynn Laycock and mayor Katsuaki Miyamoto signed a Memorandum of continued Friendship.

"The mayors reaffirmed their interest in the agreement signed by both cities, and expressed their desire that the sister city relationship nurture the lasting friendship between the peoples of our cities, while contributing to the friendship and goodwill between Minamata and Devonport, Japan and Australia."

The Devonport Maritime Museum and the Devonport Orchid Society also made presentations to Minamata City to recognise the significant occasion.

Members of the community

joined the delegation for the dedication of the Sister City Friendship Area and Roundhouse Park on the foreshore of the Mersey River. A plaque inscribed in both languages

exchanges were at the heart of the sister city movement.

"We saw plenty of that while the delegation was in Devonport."

Alderman Laycock said that



Minamata mayor Katsuaki Miyamoto and Devonport mayor Lynn Laycock sign the Memorandum of continued Friendship in the Devonport Civic Centre council chamber.

was laid at the base of the new seat located near the ornamental cherry trees, planted last year at the beginning of the Sister City 10th anniversary celebrations.

Alderman Laycock farewelled the visitors and said people to people

apart from many other benefits, this aspect of the sister city relationship was probably what left the most lasting impression on the citizens of both communities as they got to know and understand each other better.

Top speakers for the top city CLAIR forum at Darwin

THE 2007 Australian Sister Cities annual conference will be held at the newly refurbished Darwin Entertainment Centre, with speakers crossing a wide range of knowledge.

They will discuss issues such as local-level responses to climate change and global conflict, Australia's links with Asia, and initiating and building support in the community for sister cities projects.

Speakers will include newly appointed director of the United Nations Information Centre for Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, Canberra based, Abdullah Saleh Mbamba.

Mr Mbamba has also served as director of the United Nations Information Centre in Jakarta, Indonesia and Islamabad, Pakistan. He will speak about the United Nations role in combating climate change at the local level as well as working with the youth delegates as part of the youth program.

Noted Channel 7 foreign



St Mary's Cathedral, Smith Street, Darwin.

affairs presenter on the 'Sunrise' program, Keith Suter will speak about the sister cities movement in the context of global conflict and how cities can work for peace.

Dr Suter is a member of a global think tank, The Club of Rome, whose 100 members include luminaries such as Mikhail Gorbachev, Bill Gates, Al Gore, and

Jimmy Carter.

With his skills as an author and academic, and his broad experience on radio and television, Dr Suter brings a wealth of knowledge to the conference.

Other speakers and presenters at the conference will include the Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads, Jim Lloyd, the Northern Territory

Minister for Local Government and Housing Elliot McAdam, executive director of the Northern Territory Red Cross Sharon Mulholland, Anchorage, Alaska, Fire

Department chief Craig Goodrich, and the Territory's own, ABC radio presenter and Australia's funniest working mother Fiona O'Loughlin.

The 13th annual CLAIR Forum will be held in Darwin on Wednesday 3 October 2007 in conjunction with the 2007 Australian Sister Cities Association Conference.

The forum will explore the role of local government in promoting sustainable tourism and facilitating a dialogue between policy makers and tourism experts.

Tourism can bring a range of benefits to regional communities, and the CLAIR Forum will explore how local government and business can work in partnership to invigorate

the community, economy, and environment.

Speakers will look at strategies for local level development and community building through tourism, exploring how international connections such as sister city relationships can be enhanced by Australia Japan tourism and business, bringing mutual benefits to communities and economies.

The CLAIR forum is open to all who have an interest in sustainable tourism, sister cities, local government, and Japan.

A year to celebrate

THE year 2007 is one of celebration for both ASCA and Darwin City Council.

Delegates will be able to celebrate their achievements at the 25th Anniversary Awards Gala Dinner on Wednesday 3 October.

The 2007 conference marks 25 years of the Australian Sister Cities Association, and also marks the 25th Anniversary of the signing of Darwin's first Sister City agreements, with Kalymnos in Greece and with Anchorage in Alaska.

This year is also the year in which Darwin

City Council celebrates its 50th anniversary.

Politician returns to youth platform

BRENNAN MP James Burke will be a keynote speaker at the youth section of the Australian Sister Cities conference in Darwin.

Mr Burke is a founding member of the Darwin Youth Sister City Organisation (DYSCO), a community youth group within the Darwin City Council's sister cities programs.

Mr Brennan was also a member of the Haikou Sister City Community Committee.

In 1994, he was one of four students to go to Haikou, China on a 12 month exchange.

He has been part of Lord Mayoral delegation visits to Ambon and Haikou with the aim of fostering closer links between young people.

Mr Brennan gave talks in Ambon that led to the formation of the Ambon youth sister cities group and has attended several ASCA national conferences.

Darwin support for sister cities movement has been strong

DARWIN City Council has been involved in the Sister City Movement since establishing its first joint agreement with Kalymnos in Greece in 1982. Since the inaugural Kalymnos signing, other agreements have been sealed with cities and communities as diverse as Anchorage in Alaska, Ambon in Indonesia, Haikou in China, Milikapiti in the Territory's Tiwi Islands, and Dili in East Timor.

The dates and places of signings are listed below in chronological order.

Kalymnos: Signing 23 April 1982 in Darwin.

Anchorage: Signing 28 July 1982 in Darwin, 23 September 1982 in Anchorage.

Ambon: Signing 28 October 1988 in Ambon, 21 July 1989 in Darwin.

Haikou: Signing 5 September 1990 in Darwin.

Milikapiti: Signing 5 July 1999 in Darwin.

Dili: Signing 18 September 2003 in Darwin.

Darwin City Council also has a Friendship Agreement with the Japanese city of Kibi-Cho, signed in Darwin on 8 August 2003.

Further information on the 2007 ASCA conference is available on the web www.ascadarwin2007.com

or contact the sister cities officer, Samantha French on 08 8930 0695 or s.french@darwin.nt.gov.au

Darwin is a city on the move

DARWIN is the main service centre for a wide range of industries headed by mining, offshore oil and gas production, pastoralism, tourism and tropical horticulture.

In business and industry circles, Darwin is described as Australia's gateway to South East Asia.

It's closer to the Indonesian capital of Jakarta than it is to Canberra and is about the same flying time from Singapore and Manila as it is from Sydney and Melbourne.

Darwin's weather is perfect from May to September.

The days are mild and the nights are balmy and cool. This is the Dry Season, when the days are characterised by gentle Southeast trade winds and blue skies are the norm.

During the Dry the early morning humidity is commonly around 65%, dropping to about 40% in the afternoon.

This is wonderful weather for almost anything, especially for enjoying the great outdoors day or night. Sports played at night are a way of life in Darwin.

The coolest months of the year are June and July, when the daily temperature

range is 19 to 30 degrees, with the hottest months October and November when daily temperatures are between 25 and 33 degrees. Being a monsoonal climate there is a distinctive Wet Season period, with most rain falling between December and March.

There can be high intensity storms at this time, often providing spectacular lightning displays.

Last Wet, a single thunder-

storm over Darwin produced an incredible 1,634 lightning flashes in just a few hours. The humidity during the Wet is regularly over 70 per cent.

Despite this, many locals prefer the green and special beauty during this time to that of the Dry.

In past years the tourist season has been concentrated between May and September but it now flows increasingly throughout the year.

An increasing number of visitors also prefer the special charm of Darwin's Wet Season.

Darwin averages 8.5 hours of sunshine a day, an annual rainfall of 1,669mm, 110 rain days (over 0.2mm or more), a mean temperature for the hottest month of 29.2 degrees and a mean temperature for the coldest month of 24.8 degrees.



Darwin has plenty of walks and parks to explore.